

Theory of Miracles,

REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

With the omnipotent One there can of course be no such thing as a miracle. We may well suppose that with Him all operations are alike easy. "He summons into being with like ease a whole creation and a single grain." And if we could witness the outgoings of divine power through all space and all time, probably nothing to us would seem miraculous. We can well suppose that many events that are miraculous to us now and new are but ordinary events to the angels. The sweep of their operation is so much wider than ours, and the period of their operation is so much longer than ours, that events which strike us as astounding and miraculous, may appear to them as casual and ordinary. All the same, however, it is right and reasonable for us to think and speak of miracles as such; to us they are really so; it is our limited field of view that makes them so. Let me illustrate. There is a leaf, hanging to the bough of a tree. That leaf teems with insect life. To the myriads of insects that inhabit it that leaf is really a world. Now, when the fall of the year comes on the leaves drop off. The supreme moment comes when this particular leaf drops off. With its myriads of insects—all so full of life, and motion, and enjoyment—this leaf-world falls into the dark river below. What a catastrophe for that little world. It is as great a catastrophe, relatively, as that of our own world will be when it is destroyed by fire. Now the drowning of that leaf world must seem to its inhabitants as a miracle. Why? Because they had never seen or known of such an event before. Those insects had lived but a single summer; their outlook was very narrow; they had no idea of the ruin which every autumn brings to countless worlds like their's. But to us such an event is no miracle. We have seen the same thing happening through many years, and happening to many leaves just like this. The event, therefore, which is an awful miracle to those insects, is but an ordinary occurrence to us. And just so, when the supreme hour comes in which this little world of ours will be destroyed, there are probably beings to whom it will appear as an ordinary event. To them this world may perhaps be no more than a leaf in a forest, and our world's whole existence may seem but a passing season. Even now and here, on this remote spot of earth, we have been able to observe that other worlds have burnt out. Quite lately, in that most strange and sudden glow of a star in Perseus we believe we had before us "the august spectacle of a world on fire." This, therefore, may be a common occurrence in the majestic sweep of God's great universe. So miracles on earth may be no miracles in heaven. Nothing can be a miracle with God. Here we have often but "the hidings of his power." It is right and reverent, however, for us to think and speak of certain events as miracles. For us there must be miracles "until the day break, and the shadows flee away." Mimico.

The electrician cannot charge your body with electricity while a single thread connects you with the ground, and breaks the completeness of your insulation. The Lord Jesus cannot fully save you while there is point of controversy between you and Him. Let Him have that one last thing, the last barrier and film to a life of blessedness, and glory will come filling your soul.—F. B. Meyer.

Our Young People

General Topic:—A Strong Weak Man—
Judges 16: 20-30.

BY REV. W. A. STEWART, M. A.

Samson is a good example of the strong weak man. Strong on the one side of his nature he is weak on the other. Strong physically, astonishing and amusing the Philistines with extraordinary feats of strength; strong intellectually, the minister of justice and defender of his people, raised up by God Himself; strong socially, the popular and successful leader of the Children of Israel; he is at the same time a man of strange weaknesses. His actions are the fruit of impulses and emotions; and his life is a tangled skein of strength and weakness, wisdom and folly, mirth and passion. Worst weakness of all is his apparent ignorance of defect, Confident and hopeful beyond measure, like so many other strong men, he was often found unprepared, and so at last fell an easy prey before his enemies.

How many of us might be described in some such way. Strong in some virtues, weak in others. Generous but impractical; quick to devise, slow to accomplish; exact in all matters of duty; careless as to the calls of charity. Peter is strong in initiative, Philip is weak. John is trustworthy, Judas is the reverse. As none is perfect, none is strong all round.

However, one of the great lessons of history and experience is that our strength often lies in our weakness, and our weakness in our strength. The helplessness of the babe is its strength; its weakness makes an irresistible appeal for help. Samson's strength was the cause of his own destruction. It was on the score of courage that Peter most miserably failed.

The truth is the difference between our strength and our weakness is so little, in view of opposing forces, that often times it practically amounts to nothing at all. To ourselves the difference may seem infinite; but this is only the visions of the child who fancies the top of the trees are close against the skies.

When the embankment suddenly collapses and the lake sweeps down upon the village below; or when the awful avalanche comes thundering down the mountain, what avails the difference between a little more or a little less human strength?

So in the moral or spiritual world. In seasons of quietness and tranquility our stronger virtues appear to shine with resplendent lustre, whilst our weaker ones seem so faint and uncertain. We are proud of the one and almost ashamed of the other. But in the hour of sore temptation, when the principalities and powers and the spiritual hosts of wickedness are leagued against us nothing can save us; not our good principles; not our moral strength; not our fair virtues; not our discretion—nothing but the good hand of God. Then that sense of weakness which makes us summon to our aid divine strength becomes our true and only strength.

Oh how earnest and frequent, therefore, should be our prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." But if in the good providence of God we are led into temptation there is hope yet, for with the temptation He has promised to open up for us a way of escape. Let our prayer be, "Deliver us from evil."

It is in this way we realize the true connection between the two familiar petitions of the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

L'Amable.

Random Reflections.

The Hypocrite can be found in politics as well as in the pew.

The confession of Christ is found in a good life.

I know some men who are all run down by gossiping neighbors. I am not one who believes in telling a man he is a pretty good fellow, but all he needs is a little patching up. Patches on old garments only makes the rent worse. Jesus never said, ye must be patched up, but "ye must be born again."

One of the practical branches that should be added to our course of study in the public schools, is to teach young men how to hoe potatoes and plow corn, and young women how to play the piano, cook and sew.

It don't hurt any boy to know how to sew a button on his own trousers.

A person who has any common sense has none of it to spare.—Wm Barnes Lower, in *Herald and Presbyter*.

Daily Readings.

Mon., July 15.—The weakness of strength.
Luke 18: 18-27
Tues., July 16.—Confidence that fails.
1 Cor. 10: 9-15
Wed., July 17.—Humility that succeeds.
Luke 18: 9-14
Thurs., July 18.—Having one, having all.
Luke 10: 38-42
Frid., July 19.—The weak man strong.
Sat., July 20.—When God is for us.
Ps. 89: 13-21
Sun., July 21.—Topic. *A strong weak man.*
Judg. 16: 20-30

At the battle of Naseby, King Charles stirred by a noble impulse, led forward his horse-guards to do or die; but the Earl of Carnworth seized his bridle and stopped him, saying, "Will you go upon your death?" Had the king been indeed a king, as ready to stake his own life for his kingdom as he was to stake the lives of others, it would have gone hard with the man who sought to halt him, for in such a case no man is stopped by another unless he himself is more than willing. Such is Roosevelt's comment on this historical incident, and it is applicable to many a spiritual battle field.

Silently and imperceptibly as we wake or sleep, we grow and wax strong, we grow and wax weak, and at last some crisis shows us what we have become.—Bishop Westcott.

There is nothing like prayer for producing calm self-possession. When the dust of business so fills your room that it threatens to choke you, sprinkle it with the water of prayer, and then you can cleanse it out with comfort and expedition.—Rev. James Stalker.

"I CAN confess Christ by my life; there is no need of words"; we often hear this said. But on the judgment day we want Christ to confess us in words, by declaring that we are His; and He has said that as we confess Him now, so He will confess us then.